The 10 Biggest HR Trends in 2021 – The Age of AI

"A new priority for HR: one which requires leaders and teams to develop a fluency in artificial intelligence while they re-imagine HR to be more personal, human and intuitive"

- Jeanne Meister – Future Workplace

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Improving lives and organizations

Welcome! And thank you for taking time out of your busy day to read this whitepaper. With emerging and disruptive technologies impacting heavily the new age, the future of HR is both digital and human as HR leaders need to focus on optimizing the combination of human and automated work.

This is driving a new priority for HR: One which requires leaders and teams to develop a fluency in Artificial Intelligence while they re-imagine HR to be more personal, human and intuitive. As we enter the age of AI, it's the combination of AI and human intelligence that will transform work and workers as we know it. The human factor will become even more important. A paradox, but none the less a reality.

In the following we present ten HR trends leaders will need to prepare for as we enter the age of AI. Enjoy.

> *"We strongly believe that every human with their personality and skills has an individual talent and potential that only truly unfolds within the right organizational framework, values and culture."*
>
> **Morten Kongsbak & Michael Skovsgaard**
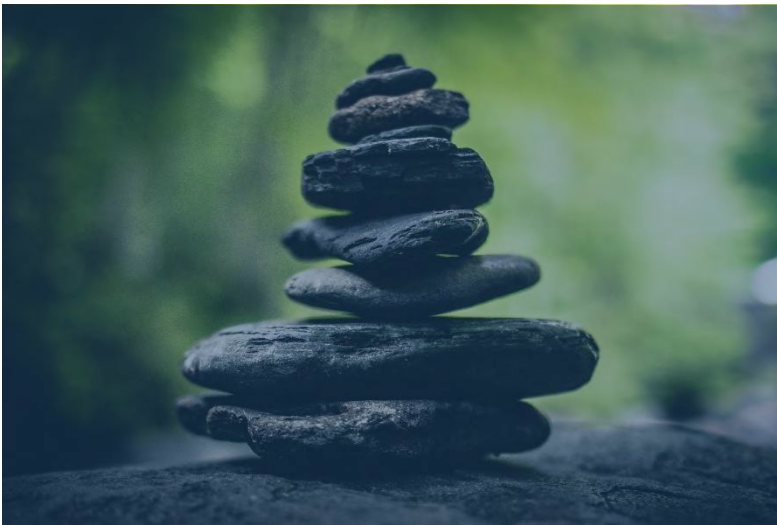> **Founders of Whaii.com**

#1

AI Plus Human Intelligence Enhances the Candidate Experience

For many companies the first pilots of artificial intelligence are in talent acquisition, as this is the area where companies see significant, measurable, and immediate results in reducing time to hire, increasing productivity for recruiters, and delivering an enhanced candidate experience that is seamless, simple, and intuitive.

An example is DBS Bank in Singapore where DBS talent acquisition was able to:

- Shorten the screening time from 32 minutes per candidate to 8 minutes per candidate
- Improve completion rate of job applications from 85% to 97%
- Respond to 96% of all candidate queries, allowing recruiters to spend more time sharing the culture and values of DBS with candidates.

Many recruiters and hiring managers underestimate the importance and work involved when working actively with values and culture in the recruiting process. It is not that easy. Best case is when you touch on the subject during an interview (with the risk of human bias and a "one size fit" or "similar to me" approach), but not really securing a deep analytic sync between the candidate's values and culture and those of the company.

Fortunately, HR technologies are emerging and make it possible to approach this important issue more professionally. Not by eliminating human interaction, but supporting human decision making in the recruitment process. In fact, bringing forward this important matter as early as possible, namely in the screening process. It is all about hiring the right candidate for the organization and about the right organization for the candidate. The perfect match.

#2

Uniquely Human Skills Will Grow in Importance

The demand for uniquely human skills will grow, according to the Future of Jobs Report from the World Economic Forum. The World Economic Forum projects that 75 million current jobs will be displaced as artificial intelligence takes over more routine aspects of work. However, 133 million new jobs will be created, and skills in both emotional intelligence and technical intelligence, like technology design and programming, will be important.

The figure below shows the Skills Demand in 2018 and Projected for 2022.

Today, 2018	Trending, 2022	Declining, 2022
Analytical thinking and innovation	Analytical thinking and innovation	Manual dexterity, endurance and precision
Complex problem-solving	Active learning and learning strategies	Memory, verbal, auditory and spatial abilities
Critical thinking and analysis	Creativity, originality and initiative	Management of financial, material resources
Active learning and learning strategies	Technology design and programming	Technology installation and maintenance
Creativity, originality and initiative	Critical thinking and analysis	Reading, writing, math and active listening
Attention to detail, trustworthiness	Complex problem-solving	Management of personnel
Emotional intelligence	Leadership and social influence	Quality control and safety awareness
Reasoning, problem-solving and ideation	Emotional intelligence	Coordination and time management
Leadership and social influence	Reasoning, problem-solving and ideation	Visual, auditory and speech abilities
Coordination and time management	Systems analysis and evaluation	Technology use, monitoring and control

Source: Future of Jobs Survey 2018, World Economic Forum.

Scientific surveys (e.g. Deloitte Human Capital Trends 2019) show that along with a higher impact of technologies in the organizations, companies' success criteria will increasingly depend on human capital and the capability to develop and maintain a strong organizational foundation.

So, start putting more emphasis on **personality, values and culture attributes** in addition to skills to strengthen your team and organization. This way you meet new demands prompted by the changing and emerging new technologies that will have a huge impact on your competitive edge.

People, organizational and team foundation will become an even more important factor in achieving a competitive edge, but likely in a new framework. Focusing on a strong people foundation and matching preferences within personality, values and culture will become vital to stay ahead.

#3

Artificial Intelligence
Won't Take Away Jobs
But Help Workers Do Jobs
Better

Gartner estimates that artificial intelligence will create more jobs than it eliminates. The focus will be on deciding how to use AI to help workers do their jobs better.

PwC (PwC) reports that 20% of executives at U.S. companies have artificial intelligence initiatives that will roll out AI across their business and expect AI investment to both re-imagine jobs and work processes as well as grow profits and revenue.

The figure below shows how this sample of 600 HR leaders answered the question: Where is AI Being Used in HR?

Where is AI being used in HR?

Source: AI at work. Survey conducted by Oracle and Future Workplace of 600 HR leaders in North America

Hilton is a good example of a company who has also experienced other business benefits; such as increasing the diversity of their talent pool and enabling their recruiters to identify a high performing candidate faster. Hilton has invested in upskilling the recruiter rather than making the role redundant. Embracing artificial intelligence as a tool in the recruiter's tool belt to help them streamline the hiring process, while never making the final decision about hiring.

#4

New Jobs Will Be Created Using Artificial Intelligence

Creating new jobs as artificial intelligence becomes more widespread inside companies will be a huge priority for C-suite leaders.

The Center for the Future of Work at Cognizant Technology Solutions tackled this issue with two reports, whereof one is "21 Jobs for the Future". Below one illustration of how these jobs have been organized from low tech to high tech over the 10-year horizon from 2019 to 2029.

It gives an indication how the outlook of job functions and transformation HR will need to support. Undoubtedly the transformation pace within a 10 years' time will become high and thus the need to build agile and strong organizational structures. HR technologies are built to support such transformation letting HR focusing on processes becoming more human and intuitive.

#5

An
Artificial
Intelligence
Ready
Workforce
Will Be
Critical
To An
Organization's
Future

Gartner predicts that by 2022 one in five workers engaged in non-routine tasks will rely on AI to do their jobs. As employees depend on the insights of AI to do their jobs, developing an AI ready workforce will be a competitive advantage.

As we head into 2021 — with AI moving from consumers' lives into the workplace – upskilling non-AI workers to learn how to work with AI is becoming increasingly important. Developing an AI ready workforce involves five key initiatives:

1. Identify the business problem to solve using artificial intelligence and start collecting data on the current state of the problem and the key KPI you want to impact with AI.

2. Build a cross functional team of key stakeholders to educate them on the business benefits of using AI to solve key business problems.

3. Implement learning opportunities for key job roles impacted in HR by AI (such as those in Recruiting, New Hire On-Boarding and Corporate Learning).

4. Identify new jobs and skills needed as AI is leveraged in the workplace.

5. Change performance management and development skills needed in HR roles to include a fundamental understanding of how to use artificial intelligence across the employee life cycle.

This is creating a road map and the opportunity for HR to take giant leaps in using HR technology and consequently improving competitive edge.

#6

Skills-Based Hiring Gains Traction

Skills-based hiring is defined as the practice of setting specific skills and competency requirements for a job rather than rely solely on a candidates' academic credentials. Today, more FORTUNE 1000 firms are going on record hiring candidates without a college degree as a requirement.

Previously the company and institute Future Workplace hosted a skills-based hiring Hackathon where they asked, why weren't more companies adopting skills-based hiring to widen the talent pool?

Skills-based hiring may start by changing a job description and removing a degree requirement, but it requires shifting mindsets on where and how a company sources talent. What's needed is to change the mindsets of hiring managers and business leaders to source in new ways.

These new ways to source non-traditional candidates range from Boot Camps, Coding schools, Technical high schools, job training conducted at community centers, high schools, or even sponsor a companywide Hackathon.

At Whaii we believe in the combination of a more focus on personality, values and culture match preference in addition to skills-based hiring. We believe that every candidate has a talent, however the talent only and truly unfolds in the right organizational framework – values and culture - in coherence with personal attributes and skills.

#7

Workers Will Trade Money For Meaning at Work

The experience of meaningful work is a personal one, as [Gallup](#) reports, we are working on average 47 hours per week with one in five working more than 60 hours each week. Increasingly workers are searching for meaningful work, a workplace that aligns to their values and a supportive and healthy work culture.

In fact, workers said they'd be willing to forego 23% of their entire future lifetime earnings in order to have a job that was always meaningful to them. This means that building greater meaning at work is no longer a "nice to have," but a business imperative. Employees who find meaning at work are happier, more productive and hardworking, and are absent less.

On average, American workers who place a higher value on meaningful work are in a more senior position, and if they are working in a company that offers meaningful work they stay longer. Employees who find work highly meaningful are 69% less likely to plan on quitting their jobs within the next six months, and have job tenures that are 7.4 months longer on average than employees who find work lacking in meaning, according to [Harward Business Review](#).


As the quest for meaning in the workplace grows, more HR leaders are putting a greater emphasis on communicating their company's culture and sharing their purpose and meaning across the employee population. This involves creating opportunities from training to mentoring and coaching to promote a shared vision and a healthy and supportive work culture.

As just as important is to start screening candidates with emphasis on personal match preferences namely within values and culture to support strengthening the organizational foundation. A good and supportive starting point to enhance team building on a common foundation and avoiding costly attrition rates and risk of setbacks. It all about hiring the right people – supporting a competitive edge.

#8

## Two Powerful Employee Perks Emerge: Access to Natural Light and Career Development
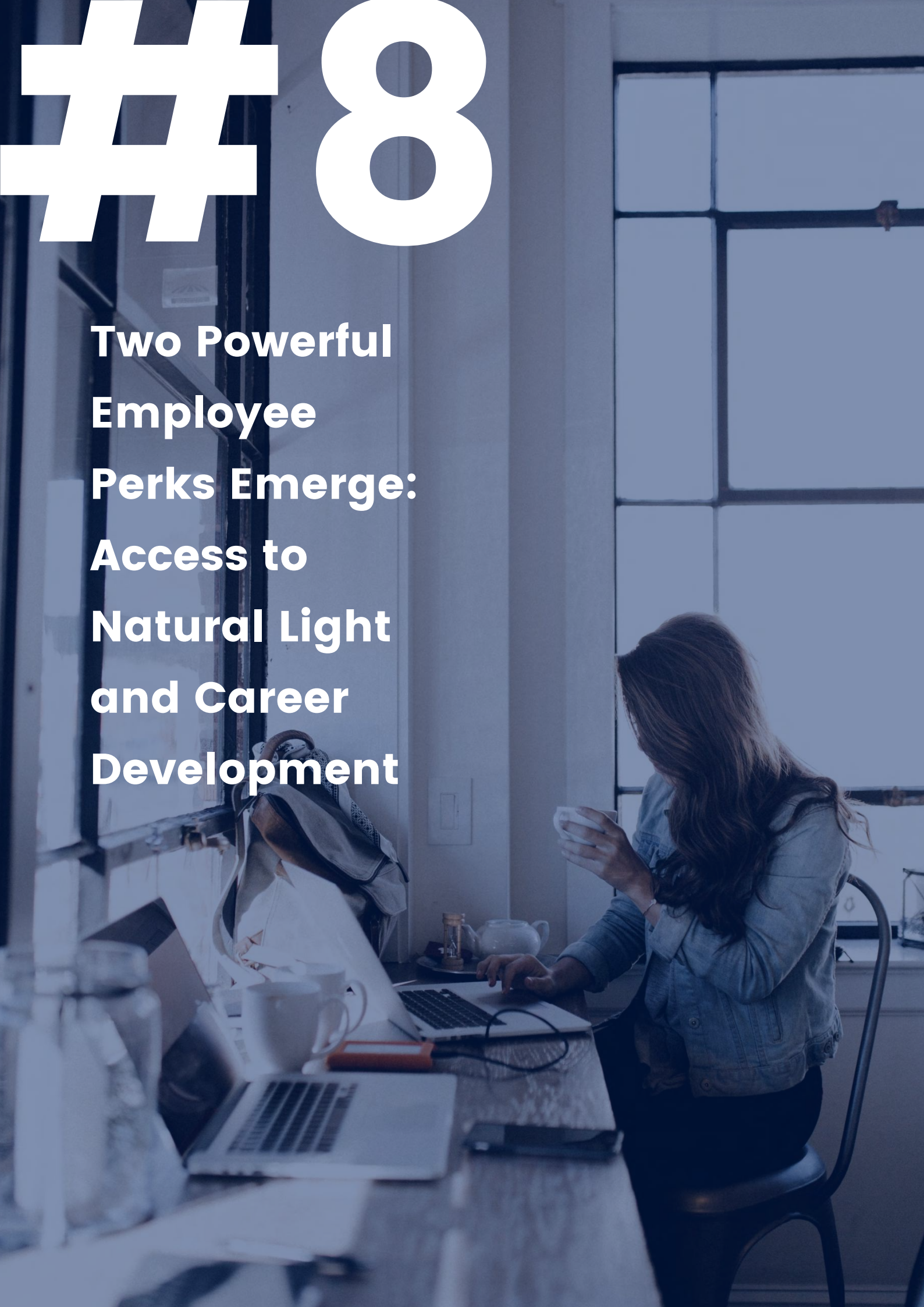
The institute Future Workplace created a survey called "[The Employee Experience](#)" and it reveals that employees crave something far more fundamental and essential to human needs.

In a research poll of 1,614 North American employees, they found that access to natural light and views of the outdoors are the number one attributes of the workplace environment, outranking traditional benefits like onsite cafeterias, fitness centers, and premium perks including on-site childcare.

Amazon's Spheres relies on the premise that natural light, plant life, and healthy activities reduce employee stress and improve job satisfaction more so than a standard office building. Note that in contrast to many of its peers, Amazon has chosen to invest in Spheres rather than other office perks such as free lunches and snacks.

In addition to designing the physical environment to promote employee well-being, companies are also creating more opportunities for internal career mobility. Companies are recognizing the importance of creating internal mobility and job rotation programs to keep employees motivated and engaged.
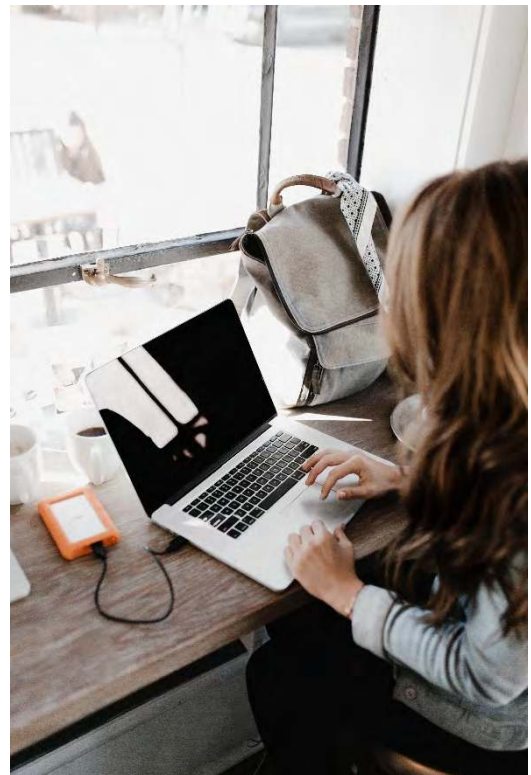
Both MasterCard and Intuit stress career planning and invest in internal career mobility and navigation. The Wall Street Journal reports each company is a leader in their industry in terms of profitability.

#9

**Virtual
Reality Is
Transforming
Corporate
Training**

![whaii logo]

A growing number of heads of global learning & development are piloting Virtual Reality (VR) to train employees. And the most interesting use cases revolve around using virtual reality for compliance training.

Verizon is using virtual reality to train store managers on protocol in case there is a store robbery. Lou Tedrick, VP-Global Learning & Development, Verizon, says, "We've found that virtual reality is the best way to effectively replicate learning experiences that were previously challenging or impossible, such as our Retail Store Robbery. The feedback we've received from our participants in these difficult learning scenario trainings justifies the additional investment involved in VR over a more traditional instructional method."

In addition to Verizon, MasterCard is using virtual reality to help employees improve their soft skills as well as train them on what to do in a crisis situation such as a building fire.

Walmart is also using virtual reality to train 1 million associates across 4,700 stores in the U.S. on various aspects of store operations from taking care of produce to handling crowds on Black Friday.

The future is now.

#10

HR Call-to-Action:
Preparing For The Future of
Work is a Team Sport

[Deloitte Capital Trends](#) reports a key challenge for business leaders is the need to work more closely together: acting as a symphony of experts playing in harmony.

But, three-quarters of those surveyed said C-level executives do not agree on common priorities or in concert. Often, the CHRO focuses on HR, CIO on IT issues, CFO on numbers, CMO on marketing — and now new C-level players are appearing – Chief Digital Officer, and Chief Ethical Officer.

As the pace of change accelerates, it is more important than ever for C-level executives to agree on a shared vision in the age of AI. Preparing for the future of work is a team sport.

You are very welcome to visit our website whaii.com and be inspired by how our HR technology AI screening tool Whaii Match can support you in the above effort.

Let's make it personal! Thank you for your time.

Whaii Match is one of the first truly automated candidate screening tools to not only analyze based on skills but also on personality, values and culture. All automated. Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) it empowers the modern HR professional to hire the right people, saves time and makes sure no talent escapes un-hired. It is set to transform the screening process completely. You are very welcome to visit our website whaii.com and be inspired by how our screening tool Whaii Match can support you in your efforts. Sophisticated HR Technology, but with a human touch. Let's make it personal!